

City Mission Work.

BY ELDER JERROLD, OF PHILADELPHIA.

I climb a rickety stairway,
A handful of tracts in hand;
A Bible and a hymn book,
Before a door I stand.

I rap, and in feeble accents
A woman says "Come in;"
She lies on a bed of anguish,
Haggard and pale and thin.

An infant lies beside her.
She looks upon the child,
And thinks of its absent father
And how she was beguiled.

I read to her from the Bible,
I take her by the hand,
And tell her of Christ the Saviour,
And a home in the better land.

Her hour is drawing nearer;
She knows that she must go;
The look of death is upon her,
Her pulse beats weak and slow.

She says as she looks upon me
With a look I shall ne'er forget,
"When my spirit has departed,
What will become of my pet?"

Her pet is the babe beside her.
It's father is far away;
And now that she is going,
What will become of it, pray?

Yes, what will become of the baby,
The child of sin and shame;
Who will adopt the baby?
Who will give it a name?

I try to comfort the mother,
But comfort refuses to come
Until the question is settled,
"Who will give baby a home?"

"O preacher," the mother murmured,
"The child is not to blame;
The Father in Heaven won't blame it
Because of it's mother's shame."

I promised the child should be cared for,
Then comfort seemed to come,
And she felt that she was ready
To go to her heavenly home.

"Ready to go," said the mother,
"Weary and tired of life."
Poor broken-hearted mother!
A mother, but not a wife.

Why had she chosen a garret
To shelter herself and her child?
Was there no other woman
That would upon her have smiled?

No other woman to welcome
The mother and her child.
To shield them from pain and sorrow,
When the tempest beat so wild.

That night as I led the meeting,
A sister did sing and pray,
That turned from her door one night
That fallen girl away.

Yes, drove her out in the cold world,
Without money or friends or home;
Little caring what might befall her,
Little caring where she might roam.

And yet that stately sister
Spoke her piece in meeting and sang
And prayed and said "hallelujah!"
Until the whole church rang.

She was acting the hypocrite's part,
And she certainly acted it well;
Unconscious that she stood,
Just then on the brink of hell.

Attention! Extraordinary!

In compliance with the requirements of a resolution adopted by the late S. S. Convention at Fairview, Ohio, it is my pleasant duty to issue this address to the members and churches of Ohio. And in so doing I earnestly invite the attention of all the ministers in particular and the members in general, to this important matter. It has been apparent to many of us for some time that a congregational church government needs organization and system as well as any other form of government, and it has also been painfully apparent to me at least, that we are not properly organized, that we are doing business entirely too much at random. Resolutions are passed at our conventions, and pledges made which the congregations never authorized, and, as a result, the resolutions are ignored and the pledges are not kept. Dissatisfaction has grown out of it, and if this state of

things continues much longer it will result in general disintegration and ruin. Brethren of the State of Ohio, we cannot afford this. The opportunity to build up a grand and glorious brotherhood is ours. We must not lose it. But we must better understand our chosen system of church government and work in harmony with its principles; if we hope to succeed. And in order to bring the case more clearly to our understanding it may be best to point out some of the mistakes of the past. We will take Ashland College as a sample, and the Dayton Convention as a starting point. Here we met as a body of uninstructed delegates, and attempted to fasten upon the churches a debt, the extent of which we ourselves did not know, when, in fact, the churches had given us no such authority. The same thing was then and there done in reference to a Publishing House. Now that which was wrong in these actions was not the desire to have these things consummated, but the mistake was in agreeing to do them without being authorized by the churches—a clear violation of the fundamental principle of congregational government. The proper thing to have done would have been to carry the question back to the churches and allow them to express their willingness to assume the indebtedness and then send the same back to the next convention for united action. If a majority of congregations had instructed their delegates to accept these responsibilities, then every church and every member would have been made morally responsible for every dollar of the debt, and I venture the assertion the College would have been cleared from debt long ago.

Again, we met in convention at Ashland, where some of us at least had hoped to propose a remedy for these evils and get to a better understanding as to our form of government, but we failed. We could not keep out this baneful mania for building air castles, and in an unauthorized way running the Brotherhood into more debt for things very desirable but absolutely unauthorized and beyond our reach. The result is, the churches fail to respond. And now some of our brethren complain and even throw out intimations that they are about ready to sever their connection with the Brethren church if such and such things are not done. This is all wrong. Let us hear no more of it, but let us try the plan inaugurated by the action of the late convention, to which I, as chairman, am required to call your attention.

This plan calls on all the churches in the State to send delegates to the next convention, which is assigned to the Brethren church at Pleasant Hill in Miami County, and is to be a general state convention for S. S. work, Mission work and general church work and all questions relating to either of these branches of Christian work are to receive respectful attention. But let it be remembered that nothing of importance, and especially nothing involving financial responsibility, can be made final without being ratified or authorized by a majority of the congregations in the state. True, this may require more time, but I hold that it will be better to take time and do things right, than to plunge headlong and fail, as we have done in the past.

Another desirable end contemplated in the action of the late convention is better representation. Simply a Sabbath School and Home Mission Convention fail to bring our brethren out unless they live near the place of meeting or are blessed with more Christian zeal than is common among ordinary mortals. But when we remember that general church work is a part, and I think a very important part, of the business of the convention, we feel confident that the churches will, as a rule, send delegates, and by that means we may keep up and increase the bonds of union and Christian love, so very essential to success, and which can only be cultivated by having these social interviews. And here let me say, and I wish I could say it in tones of thunder, that the object of these conventions is not to interfere in any individual rights, nor to try to outdo one another in criticizing each other's views, but to unify and strengthen one another so as to feel a desire to meet again. Hence the necessity of annual state conventions.

Take, if you please, the G. B. Annual Meeting. Look at their enthusiasm. They will go a thou-

sand miles, lie on the soft side of a board to sleep, or rough it most any way to swell the crowd. Why is this? Not on account of the importance of the work that they do for the salvation of souls. I verily believe their work has often been in the opposite direction. But the fact that so many are always on hand gives them prestige. The railroad companies seek their patronage as they do that of political conventions or any other enthusiastic body. And it is my settled conviction that unless we can get a little more of this enthusiasm infused into our people, the work will not prosper as it should, but will be more likely to decline. We think that now we have in Ohio at least taken the necessary steps for the social power to have its effect upon us which always goes with large collections of people. I incline to the opinion and have for some time, that the fault with the German Baptist church was in the abuse of their system more than in the system itself. I hope we shall never be guilty of that fault, and if we follow up the true principles of congregationalism there can be no danger. Episcopal power cannot gain a foothold among a free people who understand properly their means of defense. The fact is, that power is on a tottering throne everywhere. Even the M. E. church, in her late conference, had to fall back on the congregational system in order to settle the most important question of the session; and the elder power in the G. B. church has lost more than fifty per cent of its prestige within the past five years. But one thing more I wish to call attention to, and that is the fact that congregationalism does not mean that each church is to be so entirely independent of all the others as to pay no attention to the workings of the general body, so indifferent as to only take care of her own little flock and fail to be represented in the convention of churches. This is a point that needs especial care, for it will, if not guarded, soon result in different practices in the different churches and a final dismemberment of the general body. Let us ever remember that in doctrine we are general, and in the incidental affairs of the local church we are congregational. Hence, every church should feel an interest in the harmonious work of the general brotherhood as well as in the local interest of her immediate surroundings.

And in conclusion, allow me to urge you to give this matter your prayerful attention, and let each congregation in the state of Ohio send delegates to the next convention, and by so doing, help to strengthen the bonds of love, peace and harmony in the general brotherhood. Other states are taking similar steps, and we fondly hope that by the time our general convention meets again we shall be better acquainted with our system of government and be prepared for more effective work. Much has been done in the short time of our existence as a church. Much more remains to be done, and I believe we have the brave hearts and willing hands to do it.

Yours in the bonds of gospel union.

P. J. BROWN.

Keeping the Sabbath.

We know scores of Christians who, with wives and children, have been led to a Sunday railway trip to a camp meeting or rural church gathering, and who have desisted in horror from a second offence of the kind. They testify that the first approach to the depot made them forget that it was God's day. The crowd, the secular conversation, the merry hilarity, the scream and rush of the train, the heat and dust, the picnic Sunday dinner, the tired, cross children, and the weary ride home, were elements that banished all consciousness of a worshipful, restful, dutiful Sabbath. During all the coming week there was no consciousness of a preceding holy day that flavors the workful term of the industrious Christian. Worse than all, the children, after recovering from the fatiguing memory of that last Sunday, pleaded for another Sunday ride, as being more pleasurable and fuller of fun than humdrum home worship. There can be little doubt that some Christian homes; unconsciously, thus educate a generation of native-born Sabbath breakers. In this sense, "Ten thousand foes arise to draw us from the skies."